

Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resource Commission

ITEM	15	INFORMATION
TOPIC	Severe Weather Protocol in State Parks	

The Natural Resource Commission requested information on procedures taken by staff to inform and provide a safe place for state park visitors during times of severe weather. This request was prompted by the several occurrences of tornados, storms, high winds, and heavy rainfalls throughout the state this spring and summer. The primary purposes of this item are to: (1) present existing procedures for informing park visitors of incoming severe weather; (2) identify alternatives currently available for storm shelters; and (3) describe the ways park staff are trained on severe weather protocol. The information will reveal that staff are generally doing a good job informing park visitors of incoming severe weather, but subsequent action taken by staff and park visitors can be improved. Very few parks have sufficient shelter for all potential park visitors. Even after being adequately informed, many park visitors choose not to seek shelter because they believe the severe weather will not ultimately be too bad or it will either pass over or around them. While park staff are trained on severe weather protocol, improvements can be made on consistency and frequency of training.

Staff will continue to analyze all existing protocol for severe weather and develop needed improvements. Available funds will determine ultimate progress on costly improvements.

Kevin Szcodronski, Parks Bureau Chief
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August 14, 2008